

ican people, I want to express my deepest condolences to the Government of Lebanon and to the families of those who were killed and wounded this morning in South Lebanon. I also offer my condolences to the Government of Fiji over the casualties among its U.N. peacekeeping personnel.

Today's events make painfully clear the importance of bringing an end to the current violence in Lebanon. To achieve that goal I call upon all parties to agree to an immediate cease-fire. An end to the fighting is essential to allow our diplomatic efforts to go forward.

Before leaving Tokyo, I directed Secretary of State Christopher to travel to the Middle East to work out a set of understandings that would lead to an enduring end to this crisis. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross will travel to the region in advance of Secretary Christopher to begin this process.

Resolving the current situation will not only stop human suffering, it will help us all to make further progress toward our goal of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. But let me say again, we should begin with an immediate cease-fire.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. at Pulkova Airport. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony in St. Petersburg *April 19, 1996*

Mayor Sobchak, Commander Seleznev, Director Shoshmin, ladies and gentlemen. We gather in this place as friends to remember the sacrifice of those who made our shared victory over fascism in World War II possible. In this cemetery lie the victims of the siege of Leningrad. For 900 days and 900 nights, the citizens here wrote with their blood and defiance one of the greatest chapters in all the history of human heroism. This place is testimony to all the Russian people gave and all they lost in the great struggle of World War II. It calls out to all of us, Russians and Americans alike, to work together in peace for the common good for all our people and for the world.

Mr. Mayor, here in this brave and beautiful city of St. Petersburg, we Americans are thousands of miles from home. But on this day, April 19, 1996, our hearts must be very close to home and to the sadness and sacrifice of our own citizens. For it was exactly one year today that a bomb destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and struck at the very heart of America.

The people who fell under the rubble of that building were ordinary Americans, men and women going about their jobs, working hard to provide for their families. They were Government workers dedicating their lives to helping people make the most of their own lives. They were daycare providers, looking out for and teaching our young children, and they were our children, full of promise and wonder, the pride and joy of their parents, the lifeblood of our future.

Today, in the somber spirit of this magnificent memorial to Russia's unforgotten and unforgettable sacrifice, I ask every American to join in a national moment of silence for the victims of Oklahoma City.

The loss we suffered in Oklahoma City reminds us all that when peace is broken, life itself becomes fragile. And so today, as we remember the staggering losses of the Russian people in World War II and the Americans who died in Oklahoma City, we pray, too, for an end to violence and the restoration of peace in the Middle East and everywhere where neighbors still fight over their ethnic and religious differences.

Let us pause to give thanks for the freedoms, old and new, that now bless our lives. And let us pause to pray for those who lost their lives to freedom's enemies, and for those whose tomorrows can still be saved, if we are wise enough and strong enough to find peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. at the Piskaryevskoye Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anatoliy Aleksandrovich Sobchak of St. Petersburg; Commander Sergei Seleznev, Leningrad Military District; and Director Alexander Shoshmin, Piskaryevskoye Cemetery. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Kazan Cathedral and an Exchange With Reporters in St. Petersburg
April 19, 1996

The President. This morning, I have had three very moving experiences: first at the cemetery, the most powerful reminder imaginable about the heroism of the Russian soldiers and the devotion of Russian citizens to the freedom of this country, and then at the Russian Museum, a wonderful picture of the magnificent history of Russian art, and of course here at this cathedral with its remarkable story, a reminder of the power of belief in the spirit in Russian history and the Russian character.

These experiences remind us of Russia's past and its achievements of the present and the remarkable changes that are going on. They also give me great confidence in the future of this country and what we can accomplish together in the spirit of peace and mutual respect and genuine partnership. And so, I feel a great deal of gratitude to the people of St. Petersburg today for these experiences that I have shared with them, and I thank them for giving me the opportunity that I have enjoyed, especially this remarkable moment at the cathedral, learning of its past, its present and what we all hope will be its future.

Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, at a place of peace like this church, what thoughts might be coming—Mr. President, coming to a place of peace like this great cathedral, I wonder if it might bring to mind any thoughts for your peace effort in the Middle East.

The President. Well, I think that the parties have got to agree to a cease-fire. It's obvious that they're neighbors, and as we have seen in the terrible events of the last few days, once someone starts the spiral of violence, it's hard to stop. And because the rockets are fired from the areas they're fired from, it's almost impossible for innocent civilians not to be hurt and killed.

We had the situation there in hand, as you know, for more than 2 years because of the peace agreement that was brokered in '93

by the Secretary of State. He is going back there. Mr. Ross is there. We are doing our very best.

Q. Do you have any information that would lead you to believe that both sides will agree to the cease-fire and what's the status right now of the negotiations?

The President. Well, I'm getting regular updates. Mr. Ross is—I think he is actually there now. And the Secretary of State will go as quickly as he finishes his talks with the Chinese Foreign Minister, and obviously, we have direct contacts with all the parties involved. I think they are looking for a way to stop the fighting, and so I am somewhat hopeful.

I do believe they are looking for a way to stop it. I think that it's obvious now that there's almost no way to contain it or prevent the loss of innocent life once the rockets start firing and the retaliation begins. So I think we have a chance, and we are going to work very hard today and tomorrow and see if we can do it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6886—National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 1996

April 19, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thousands of lives have been saved by the miracle of organ and tissue transplantation, a medical procedure made possible only by the extraordinary generosity of those who agree to donate and the profound compassion of their loved ones. Recipients are often able to resume normal lives after their transplants, working and caring for their families, and many children are in school today due to a donated liver or bone marrow. Still, the need for organs far exceeds the number donated, and many Americans wait—and some will die waiting—for suitable organs or tissues to become available.